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WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

ISTOCK

Researcher uses quantum theory to understand why jokes work
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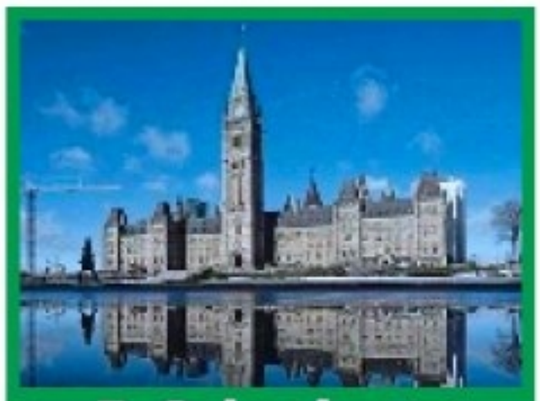

B.C. looks to federal budget for housing fix
metroNEWS

Fish can 'learn' to stay in no-fishing areas, UBC study finds
metroNEWS

Transit police officer testifies in fatal shooting inquest metroNEWS

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Your essential daily news

Raise our taxes! Wealthy New Yorkers want to pay more to the government. **World**

Province looks to federal budget for housing fix

MARKETS

UBC prof says it's vital issues are addressed on Wednesday

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Edmonton

Vancouver housing experts are looking for three magic words in Wednesday's federal budget: National Housing Strategy.

No matter how many dollars are allotted to housing in the document being tabled by Finance Minister Bill Morneau, University of British Columbia community and regional planning professor Penny Gurstein is watching to see if government has a cohesive plan to tackle homelessness, housing affordability, social housing and rental supply.

"We've been asking for a national housing strategy, and I think that's the important thing," Gurstein told Metro. "I think there has to be a very clear signal that they see the importance of looking at housing issues across the country and as a system, that it's not something that can just be left for the marketplace to sort out."

B.C. Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development Peter Fassbender told Metro the province is also looking for housing intervention at a federal level.

"BC Housing is forecasting about $233 million from the federal government. Anything that they add to that and augment that in developing a national strategy will be good for all of the province and definitely here in the Lower Mainland," Fassbender said.

> **We've been asking for a national housing strategy, and I think that's the important thing.**
> Penny Gurstein

Money for the region's mayors' Phase Two transit plan — including support for a Pattullo Bridge replacement, Surrey light-rail transit and a subway along Broadway in Vancouver — would also have a spin-off effect on housing affordability in Vancouver, Fassbender said.

"Investment in transportation has a net benefit in increasing density and supply; that will help the pricing," he said. "We're optimistic we're going to continue to see the federal government invest in housing."

Yet, the 2017 budget is expected to take a more cautious, steady-as-she-goes approach.

With lacklustre growth sill plaguing the Canadian economy and the tab for last year's billions and billions of dollars worth of commitments looming large, the government has precious little room to introduce new spending.

"Not everything is spending; not everything is money," one Finance Department source told The Canadian Press, speaking on condition of anonymity in order to discuss details in advance of the budget's release.

The budget will still be "transformative" and "bold" in terms of what it will do for Canada's policy direction, particularly in areas like skills, training and innovation, insisted the source.

"The budget's a public policy document, and I think the story will be much more into where the country needs to go as opposed to dollar amounts," the source said.

"If you're just looking at tables, that's not where this story is going to be."

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

The centre block of the Parliament buildings where the budget will take place.
ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

OPIOID CRISIS

City warns of further fentanyl fatalities

The fentanyl-fueled overdose crisis is showing no signs of slowing down.

The City of Vancouver warned Tuesday that the number of overdose deaths in March is likely to surpass the 25 deaths reported in February. According to the city, Vancouver police have reported 21 suspected overdose deaths in the first 21 days of March, already nearing the 25 reported in all of February.

The deaths recorded by police still need confirmation from the BC Coroners Service and don't include all overdose deaths, like those that occur in hospitals, according to the city. The city says that firefighters also responded to 104 overdose calls the week of March 13, which also marks an escalation of the crisis.

"The city's first responders and front-line community service workers are at a breaking point, shouldering a large share of the overdose response in the fentanyl crisis," said Mayor Gregor Robertson in a statement.

"We desperately need the B.C. government to spend the recently received $10 million from the federal government to combat the fentanyl crisis to broaden access to clean prescription drugs, substitution therapy and treatment-on-demand to help bring relief to our first responders."

The crisis has been declared a public health emergency in B.C.

MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

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Corruption is here — just take a look

POLITICS

Charbonneau lead lawyer urges B.C. to monitor data

Jen St. Denis
Metro | Vancouver

Think political corruption isn't happening in your city or province? Think again, the lead lawyer for Quebec's Charbonneau Commission told a Vancouver audience Tuesday.

"The only difference between Quebec and the rest of Canada is that now we know about the problems that we have," Sonya LeBel said during a talk at the Peter Allard School of Law at UBC.

"That's giving us an advantage because we can start working on it. It's not whether corruption exists or not — it's there.

"When you know about it, you can start finding solutions."

Starting in 2011, the Charbonneau Commission investigated political corruption in Quebec's provincial and municipal governments. The public inquiry lasted four years, was heavily covered by the media and resulted in 60 recommendations, some of which have been adopted by government.

NDP MLA David Eby invited LeBel to speak in Vancouver in the midst of an ongoing barrage of criticism around B.C.'s no-holds-barred political donation rules.

Earlier this month, the RCMP began investigating allegations that lobbyists donated to the BC Liberals, then were reimbursed by their corporate clients — which would be against the law.

Sonya LeBel speaks during a news conference in Montreal on Feb. 21, 2017, where it was announced she would become deputy chief of staff for the Coalition Avenir Quebec. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec has strict rules in place that prohibit corporations and unions from donating, and those rules have gotten even more stringent since Charbonneau. Individual donations were capped at $1,000 per year, but that was lowered to $100 a year in 2013.

Businesses found a way to get around the rules by getting their employees to donate, then reimbursing them through expense accounts, a raise or a vacation.

Much of the wrongdoing investigated by the commission involved bid-rigging in the awarding of construction contracts. Montreal ended up paying 30 per cent more than they should have because of the collusion of a handful of companies, LeBel said.

The commission was only able to discover the collusion by collecting years of data and analyzing it for red flags like predictable amounts being bid and companies taking turns in submitting the lowest bid. LeBel recommends all provinces put in place an agency that can do this data collection and analysis. It needs to be done across all levels of government and municipalities in order to detect the patterns.

> **Businesses are doing business. If they are giving money to finance politicians, it's because they have an interest in it.** Sonya LeBel

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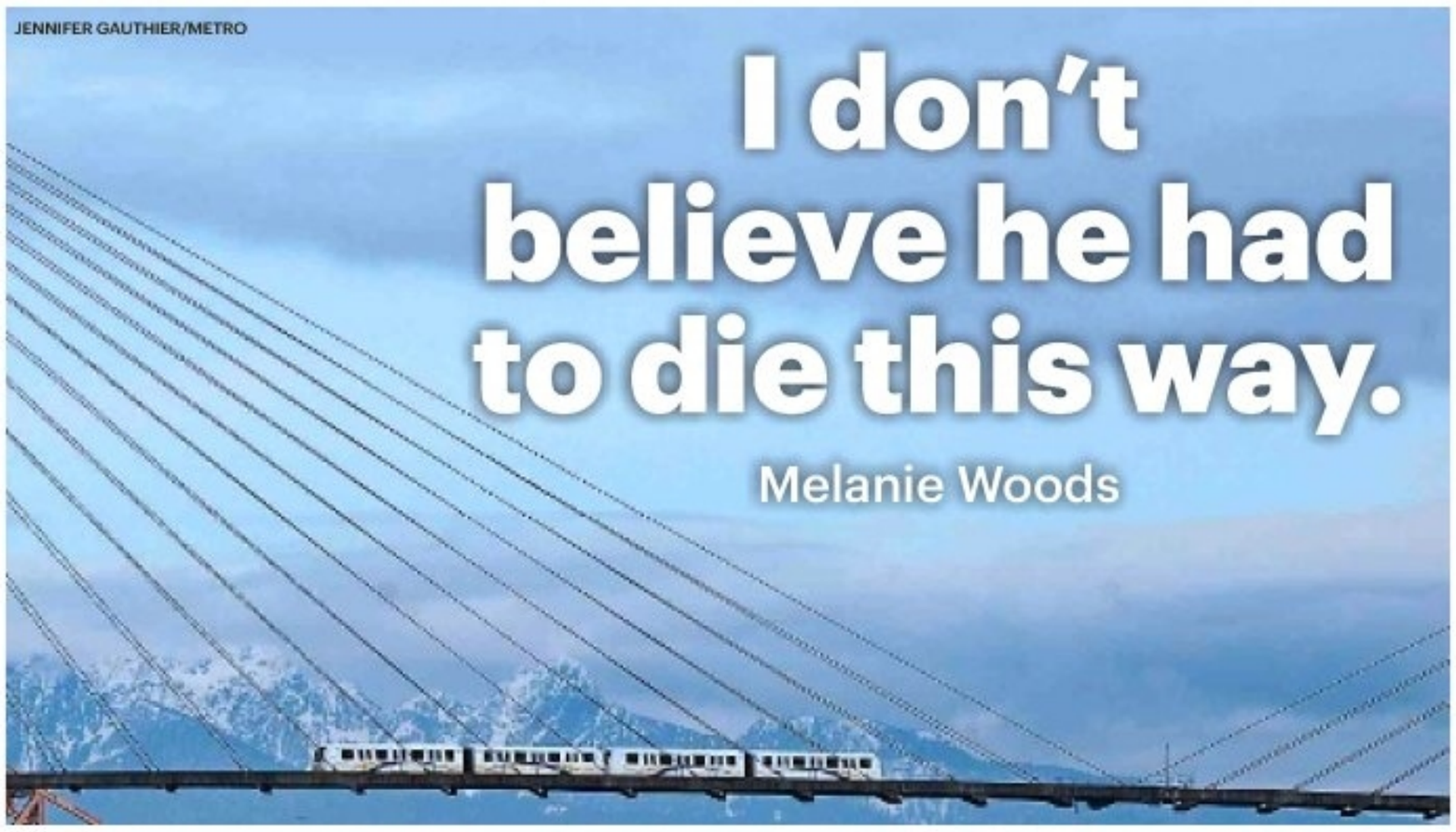
Constable says man she shot lunged at partner

INQUEST

Naverone Woods' family packs court as officer testifies



A young man who was stabbing himself in the stomach at a grocery store in Surrey lunged at transit police officers with knives in both hands before he was shot, the constable who pulled the trigger told a coroner's inquest Tuesday.

The family of Naverone Woods was emotional as they listened to Const. Pamela McKinnon's testimony about the altercation on Dec. 28, 2014, which she says led to the death of the 23-year-old man.

McKinnon testified that she and Sgt. Lee Ezra were driving to Surrey Central transit station when they heard over the police dispatch that a man had jumped over the counter of a nearby convenience store and demanded a knife.

Before arriving, they heard a second call that said the man had gone inside a Safeway store and was stabbing himself. A dispatcher also said he had chased an employee, she said.

When they entered the store, Woods was jogging on the spot with knives in both hands and mumbling incoherently, McKinnon said.

"He was bleeding heavily. There's multiple stab wounds to his abdomen and slash wounds to his forearms. He's sweating profusely. His eyes … were kind of like bugged out," she said. "He's just staring intently towards us and not responsive."

She said she and Ezra drew their firearms and repeatedly yelled at Woods to drop the knives, but he didn't appear to hear or react. The three of them were positioned in a triangle, with Woods between 2.5 and three metres from Ezra.

McKinnon testified that Woods suddenly lunged at Ezra. She fired but missed. Woods appeared surprised and his hands went up above his head, she said, before he lunged at Ezra again. McKinnon said she fired a second time, hitting him in the torso.

Coroner's counsel Bryant Mackey asked McKinnon what efforts she made to clear employees from the Safeway, but she said there was no time for that. All the employees had moved toward a corner of the store, she said.

"Everything happened so fast," she testified.

McKinnon and Ezra were carrying pepper spray, but she said it would have been ineffective. Woods was carrying knives that could have seriously injured or killed people, and pepper spray might not have stopped him from advancing, she said. McKinnon said Woods's death was not the outcome she wanted.

"I felt upset for him," she said. "I felt upset for the family."

The Independent Investigations Office, which investigates serious cases involving police, has cleared the officers of any wrongdoing. The coroner's service holds an inquest into every police-involved death in an effort to make recommendations aimed at preventing similar fatalities.

Woods's eyes were open but he was non-responsive verbally when paramedics arrived and his condition deteriorated on the way to hospital, paramedic Nathan Allan of the BC Ambulance Service testified.

Dr. Shelley Tweedle, an anaesthesiologist at Royal Columbian Hospital, said doctors and staff urgently worked to resuscitate Woods but he died at 9:20 a.m.

Mackey said methamphetamine was found in toxicology results.

The small courtroom was packed with members of Woods's family, some from his hometown of Hazelton, B.C.

Outside the inquest, Melanie Woods, the young man's sister, said she was distressed by the police officers' testimony.

Ezra testified that an employee in the parking lot said Woods was inside chasing people, and that when he went inside the store Woods was going after a staff member, but McKinnon could not recall either incident.

"I don't believe he had to die this way," said Woods.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

THEFT

Friend gives tip on stolen car

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Edmonton

It never hurts to have an extra set of eyes on the road.

That came in handy earlier this month after a family in Delta reported the theft of their 1995 Nissan Pathfinder outside their home on March 2.

Police say the car had sentimental value for the family and could not be replaced.

The whereabouts of the vehicle and the identity of the suspect remained a mystery for a week until March 9.

That's when Surrey RCMP received a call from a family friend of the victims, who just happened to be driving by the intersection of 124 Street and Old Yale Road that morning and saw the stolen car being driven around by someone else.

Kyle Robert Davies now faces several charges.

Woman injured in hit-and-run

Jeff Hodson
Metro | Vancouver

Police are asking for the public's help after a hit-and-run in East Vancouver this weekend left a 62-year-old Vancouver woman in hospital in serious medical condition.

A woman was crossing Victoria Drive at Williams Street at around 7:30 p.m. Saturday when she was struck by a southbound silver Volkswagen Jetta.

Police said the driver should be aware that they struck a pedestrian as the headlight was cracked and the car likely suffered other front-end damage.

Jokes can be a math riot

RESEARCH

Quantum models show why punny can be so funny

Wanyee Li
Metro | Vancouver

UBC Okanagan researchers say humour is so complex they need to use quantum math to explain it.

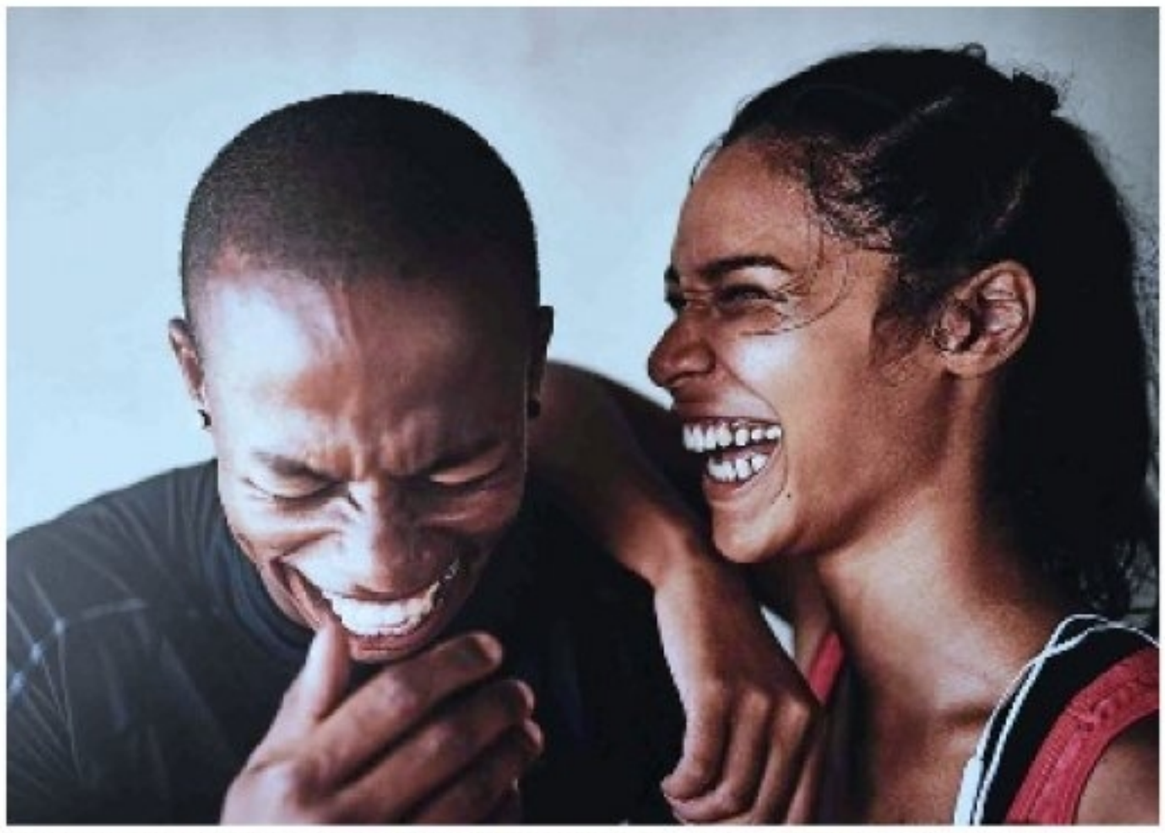
Quantum models were developed to explain scientific phenomena at the micron level but they can also explain why people find puns funny, says psychology professor Liane Gabora.

She used the following classic to explain.

"Why was six afraid of seven? Because seven ate nine."

"At the beginning of the joke you're pretty sure 'eight' is a number but the (phrase) 'afraid of' makes you hesitate," she said.

That sound of "eight" or "ate" is where people's minds struggle to hold the two meanings at the same time, and that's where quantum mathematics can help, said Gabora.



Quantum models can explain why people find puns funny, says a UBC Okanagan researcher. ISTOCK

Quantum models can explain why the "setup" part of the joke and the punchline are only funny when they are delivered one after another and not by themselves, she explained.

Okanagan researchers conducted a study on 85 participants where they rated the funniness of a joke, both in its full form as well as just the setup line or the punchline.

Gabora found it was not immediately possible to determine how successful, or funny, a joke would be.

"There's no way of predicting how funny they find the whole joke when it's put together," she said.

Except, she theorizes, by applying quantum mathematics.

"Quantum models excel at explaining ambiguity and contextuality, and that really is the case in humour," she said.

Gabora emphasized that her team has not found a proof yet and that this research is still exploratory at this point. Her research also only looks at verbal wordplay and not Mr. Bean-style physical comedy.

But modelling humour with quantum mathematics opens the doors for a whole world of possibilities. When asked whether her work could lead to comedians using quantum algorithms to craft the perfect joke, Gabora said it was possible.

"Eventually, once this is worked out a little bit more, you could write out a computer program that is based on this mathematical framework," she said.

"It's possible."

Group to look at past Chinese discrimination

Jeff Hodson
Metro | Vancouver

Vancouver has launched an advisory group to guide the city as it prepares to acknowledge and apologize for historical racist policies against people of Chinese descent.

Bylaws restricted where Chinese-Canadians could own businesses and housing covenants prevented them from buying property. Full voting rights were not granted until 1948 and they were not allowed to do business with, or be employed by, the city until 1952.

The group is made up from members of the city's cultural communities advisory committee, the mayor's working group on immigration, as well as experts and descendants.

In May, the city will hold three public consultation events that will be used to help draft a final report with recommendations for council this fall.

Earlier in the month, B.C. approved a bill to remove 19 historical private Acts of private Legislation containing racist provisions against Chinese and Japanese workers in the province.

Marine reserves can protect bluefin tuna in the long run because the fish will eventually evolve to stay within the protected area, according to a UBC study. MATANA_AND_JES/FLICKR

Fish 'learn' safe spaces

EVOLUTION

Many stay in reserves where catching them is not allowed

Wanyee Li
Metro | Vancouver

Are fish smart enough to stay in an area where they won't get fished? The answer is no, but evolution could help species eventually evolve so that they stay in marine reserves and it could happen in as quickly as 10 years, according to a UBC study.

Establishing large marine reserves that function as "no-take" zones for fishermen protects fish in the long term, according to a study initiated by UBC's Sea Around Us project.

The theory is fish that don't swim long distances will survive and pass on their genes while bold fish will die after getting fished outside of the no-take zones.

Over time, that creates a population of fish that prefer to stay within the marine reserve, says lead author Jonathan Mee.

"If they're adventurous, they die," he said.

Mee, a Mount Royal University researcher, and co-author Daniel Pauly based their study on the idea that fish behaviour is passed on to offspring via genetics.

"Any trait that you observe in nature, like behaviour, fish size, the length of a bird's beak – everything has some genetic basis, said Mee.

"The possibility of evolution has been underappreciated and it can happen very quickly – in the order of decades or faster."

Researchers could see behaviour differences among smaller fish such as yellowfin tuna within 10 years, while larger migrating fish like bluefin tuna and great white sharks would likely not "learn" to stay in marine reserves right away, said Mee.

There are currently a number of small marine reserves in B.C. waters but governments will need to establish larger 'no-take' zones in order to protect animals at the top of the food chain like sharks, he said.

Canada's Department of Fisheries established a marine protected zone on the eastside of Haida Gwaii to protect the area's glass coral reefs in February 2017.

IN BRIEF

B.C.'s economy expected to slow down in 2017-18

The Business Council of British Columbia says the provincial economy is poised to "downshift" in 2017.

The council's annual economic review and outlook says the real estate market, consumer spending and exports are slowing, leading to the loss of momentum.

The report forecasts gross domestic product, or the value of goods and services provided, will slow to an average pace of 2.2 per cent for this year, with a similar performance for 2018.

The report says the biggest factor is the slowdown in the residential real estate market in Metro Vancouver. THE CANADIAN PRESS

SAFETY

Mixing alcohol, energy drinks a big risk

Put down that RedBull if you're planning to drink vodka as well – that's the message party-goers could take from a new University of Victoria study.

That's because the risk of injury is about 20 times greater when people drink alcohol mixed with energy drinks, compared to just alcohol, said Audra Roemer, a clinical psychology researcher.

"The stimulant effects of caffeine mask the sedative effects of alcohol," she said in a written release.

"Usually when you're drinking alcohol you eventually get tired and you go home. Energy drinks mask that, so people may underestimate how intoxicated they are, end up staying out later, consume more alcohol, and engage in risky behaviour and more hazardous drinking practices."

> **People may underestimate how intoxicated they are.**
> Audra Roemer

The number of emergency-room visits due to alcohol-energy drinks doubled from 2007 to 2011 in North America, according to the UVic study.

Injury can result from both intentional behaviour like fights or attempted suicide, or accidental acts like tripping and car accidents, according to the UVic report.

Researchers analyzed 13 studies for the report but Roemer is now conducting her own study in Vancouver and Victoria emergency rooms. She hopes to establish the exact relationship between alcohol-energy drinks and physical injury.

That study could inform future Health Canada policy on regulating energy and alcohol drinks. WANYEE LI/METRO

An asylum claimant and her daughters cross the border into Quebec from the United States earlier this month. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Trump a reason for refugee surge

IMMIGRATION

Experts say xenophobic policies pushes many north

There were four times more asylum claimants arriving at land border crossings than at airports in the first two months of 2017, new Canadian data shows.

In January and February, a total of 525 air travellers — 400 in Ontario, 90 in Quebec, 35 in British Columbia and nine in Alberta — sought asylum upon arrival at airports, said the Canada Border Services Agency.

By contrast, 2,145 people crossed at official land border ports of entry and made refugee claims during the same period, including 1,085 in Quebec, 905 in Ontario, 80 in Manitoba, and 35 each in Alberta and British Columbia.

In addition to the migrants who made it through the border either legally or illegally and later filed what are known as "inland" claims, Canada received claims from a total of 5,520 refugees in the two months — a 48 per cent increase from the same period a year ago. The numbers of claimants arriving at land border crossings and airports for the same period of 2016 were not immediately available.

Given Canada's geographical isolation and the popularity of the U.S. as a destination for migrants, experts say, Ottawa historically received more refugees by air than at land borders.

Experts say the sudden rise can be attributed to the xenophobic policies of Donald Trump's administration as well as Canada's implementation of the new electronic travel authorization that applies also to visa-exempt air passengers.

"(The) airport was the easiest way, but because of the visa requirements, it is becoming more difficult to travel here by air than by land, and it is easier to get a visa to the U.S. than to Canada," said Janet Dench of the Canadian Council for Refugees.

Dench said that in years past, the council received monthly statistics from the Immigration Department on asylum claims, before the former Conservative government stopped providing the information in 2010.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

GOVERNMENT

Advocates applaud report on violence

Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Ottawa

Advocates are applauding a parliamentary report aimed at reducing domestic violence and sexual assault.

Tabled Monday by the House committee on the Status of Women, the report calls for better training for police and judges, better data on the issue and more assault centres on university campuses.

In all, it contains 45 recommendations — the committee looked at the issue on university campuses, on the internet and in the justice system.

Pam Damoff, Liberal MP for Oakville North-Burlington and vice-chair of the committee, said sexual violence is a major issue with a lot of problems to solve.

"It was a huge study, each one of these topics could have warranted a study on its own," she said.

The committee recommended better data collection, including having Statistics Canada collect information on sex-assault complaints that police deem unfounded for lack of evidence.

ONTARIO

Man accused of killing stepson caught by police

Justin Kuijer

The search is over for an Ontario man accused of fatally injuring his seven-year-old stepson moments before attempting to kill a local bank employee.

Niagara police Chief Jeff McGuire says 43-year-old Justin Kuijer was arrested by provincial police Tuesday in northern Ontario.

McGuire says the arrest in Kenora, Ont., came after a tip from a citizen. He was arrested without incident.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Few Liberal measures for the middle class have done much for middle class

It would be nice if Wednesday's budget offered some real change for Canadians

ANALYSIS

Paul Wells
Torstar News Service

Wednesday's budget will be about the middle class and innovation. Maybe it'll even be helpful! That would be nice. Unfortunately, the Trudeau government's handling of both files so far has left them in something close to a shambles.

I wrote after Social Development Minister Jean-Yves Duclos gave a presentation about 'The State of the Middle Class.' I was probably too kind.

When a tenured academic turned senior cabinet minister delivers a presentation on the middle class that (a) never defines the term "middle class"; (b) never depicts the effects of the government's actions to date on the plight of the middle class, however you want to define it; (c) offers no hint about future efforts to help the middle class — well, that's a fiasco.

The Liberals used to promise that Canadians would be able to track their own progress, using large numbers of publicly available indicators, on marvellous websites that would be part of a governing philosophy called "deliverology." These days, we get Duclos telling us how polls say we feel. But let no one criticize any Liberal emphasis on feelings. Bloomberg put the question to Bill Morneau, the finance minister, this week, and he was staunch in defending a politics of mood.

"We look at what's gone on around the world" (translator's note: this is every western politician's preferred euphemism for the election of Donald Trump) "is there anybody who questions that we should be focused on how people feel?" Morneau asked. "What are the outcomes if we don't? So I think we're going to stay on that message."

OK then. I feel worried when I read Duclos's former colleague, the Université Laval economist Stephen Gordon, pointing out in the National Post what the NDP has been saying all along: that few Liberal measures for the middle class have done much for the middle class. Take what Justin Trudeau likes to call his "middle-class tax cut." Says Gordon: "The tax cut for the median tax filer — someone reporting total income somewhere around $45,000 — is either negligible or non-existent." But if you make triple that income, you get the maximum tax benefit.

I feel like maybe we should move on to innovation. This government is the first with a minister for innovation! He's Navdeep Bains. He frequently posts photos of his meetings on Twitter, with the hashtag "#innovation."

A year and a half after he became the minister for #innovation, it's not clear what Bains's plans are. It's pretty clear that within the government he has less than complete control over #innovation.

Whatever Bains proposes, it will have company. Kevin Page, the former Parliamentary Budget Officer who now runs a policy shop at the University of Ottawa, found that there are already 147 programs and tax credits, worth a combined $22.6 billion, designed to spur #innovation. That's right now. Today. Already. The accumulated detritus of every former government.

OTTAWA

Things to look for in budget

The Trudeau government will table the second budget of its mandate Wednesday. Here are three things to look for:

1. Will Ottawa re-introduce a contingency reserve?
With so many unknowns tied to potential policy moves in the U.S. on taxes and trade, some economists predict the government will re-introduce a contingency reserve to provide a cushion for Canada's books.

2. What will be the scope of the tax-expenditure review?
Sources say the review process is ongoing, meaning the budget will not include the full range of tax changes. However, it is expected to contain at least a few smaller tax adjustments.

3. How will the budget address gender gaps?
Morneau has promised to run his budget through a gender-based analysis. This year's analysis is expected to examine how some big budget themes will affect genders.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Ban on flying with laptops questioned

AIR TRAVEL

Reasons for latest change will likely never be public

U.S. and British governments are barring passengers on some flights from mostly Middle Eastern and North African countries from bringing laptops, and other devices in carry-ons. AP

You can thank Richard Reid, a.k.a. the failed "shoe bomber," every time you remove your footwear at airport security checks. The "underwear bomber" is why you have to rub your pants and get your palms swabbed for explosive residue. Limited liquid? A failed 2006 transatlantic aircraft plot.

But passengers, irate passengers, who will soon be barred from bringing laptops on their lengthy flights to the U.S. or U.K., will probably not be given a simple answer as to why. Flights to Canada may also soon be affected.

News of the surprise travel restriction began spreading Monday night and came into effect in the U.S. early Tuesday. Passengers travelling direct from eight mainly Middle Eastern countries to the U.S. will be forbidden from carrying on electronics larger than a cellphone. Airlines were told they have 96 hours to comply. By Tuesday afternoon, Britain said they were implementing similar restrictions on six countries in North Africa and the Middle East.

Federal Transport Minister Marc Garneau also said Tuesday that Canada may follow the lead of the U.S. and Britain in relation to unspecified security threats.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

GLOBAL DIGEST

Bumblebee joins endangered species
The rusty patched bumblebee on Tuesday became the first officially endangered bee species in the continental U.S. Its listing means the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will devise a plan for returning the bee to "a healthy and secure condition." AP

L.A. expands protections
Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti expanded protections for immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally. An executive directive asks officials to follow the Police Department's longtime policy of not investigating individuals to determine their immigration status. AP

'Piggy bank' turtle dies
Tourists used to toss coins at a green sea turtle that lived in a pond in eastern Thailand, wishing for luck and longevity. But swallowing the coins turned out to be a death sentence. After having nearly a thousand coins removed from its stomach, the turtle died Tuesday. AP

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SPIRITUALIST

FINANCES

Wealthy people ask to pay more in taxes

George Soros THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Some of the wealthiest New Yorkers are asking the state to raise their taxes.

Eighty people including George Soros, Steven Rockefeller and Abigail Disney wrote to lawmakers and Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo saying they and other top earners should pay more to support schools, roads, bridges and programs to help poor and homeless residents of the state.

"Now is the time to invest in the long-term economic viability of New York," the letter reads. "We need to invest in pathways out of poverty and up the economic ladder for all of our fellow citizens, including strong public education from pre-K to college. And, we need to invest in the fragile bridges, tunnels, waterlines, public buildings, and roads that we all depend on."

The letter endorses a plan that would create new, higher income tax brackets for top earners to raise a projected $2 billion.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news

PHILOSOPHER CAT by Jason Logan

JESSICA ALLEN ON CONSPIRACY THEORIES

'I obviously don't believe in conspiracy theories — OK, except for this one really awesome one.'

Here is a truncated list of things that, if you believe them, will make me take you less seriously: the Earth is flat, vaccinations are a government plot and Barack Obama wiretapped Trump Tower.

Conspiracy theories conform to fit personal ideologies: look at all the permutations of 9/11 narratives. We're predisposed to believe what we want to believe; only in the past, you had to work to confirm those beliefs — like reading all 888 pages of the Warren Report. Now, you just have to search, click and watch.

Except for me, because I obviously don't believe in conspiracy theories — OK, except for this one really awesome one: Donald Trump is in cahoots with a Russian oligarch who goes by the nickname "the fertilizer king."

Dmitry Rybolovlev, who made his billions selling potash, was tied up in the most expensive divorce in modern history, bought a house from Will Smith, a Greek island and an estate in Palm Beach, Florida — from Trump.

I know all of this because I've fallen down a Rybolovlev rabbit hole, for which I blame Rachel Maddow. The MSNBC host has been trying to connect the dots between Trump, Rybolovlev and U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross.

So Shaq is pretty sure the Earth is flat. Who among us can resist a juicy conspiracy theory? asks Jessica Allen. AP

Long story short, as told by Maddow: Trump sold the Palm Beach mansion to the Russian for $50 million US more than he'd paid for it just four years earlier. The sale came as Rybolovlev was embroiled in divorce proceedings, and Trump owed millions to Deutsche Bank, which was fined for money laundering $10 billion, some of which belonged to Putin family members. When the CEO of Deutsche Bank stepped down post-scandal, he went to the Bank of Cyprus. Guess who once owned a stake in the Bank of Cyprus? Rybolovlev. Guess who was once vice chairman of the Bank of Cyprus? Wilbur Ross. Boom!

But this line of logic led Sonny Bunch in a Washington Post column to compare Maddow to the Oliver Stone character X, played by Kiefer Sutherland, in the film JFK.

"This is how conspiracy theorists operate," he said. "Bury your opponent in an avalanche of facts and suggest there's some secret connecting them all together, a Rosetta Stone you're on the verge of deciphering."

I feel confident I'm becoming my worst nightmare.

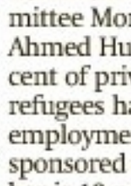
We are living in a world that doesn't make sense. Maybe every age says this, but ours has actually been dubbed the "post-truth age."

Jonathan Vance, a University of Western Ontario history professor who specializes in panic and paranoia, theorized to the Canadian Press that "we think that our society is so developed that bad things shouldn't happen." So when they do occur, we seek scapegoats. Conspiracies.

There is a glimmer of hope, though from an unlikely place: Trump. In his war on the mainstream media, he has boosted the subscription numbers of the "failing" New York Times. That he might inadvertently be the saviour of newspapers in America is almost enough to make you believe anything.

Jessica Allen is the digital correspondent on CTV's The Social.

Budget should support private refugee sponsors



Vicky Mochama
Metro | Toronto

The decades-old private sponsorship program is unique in both form and tradition.

But without sufficient resources, the agency that manages it is struggling with a backlog of potential sponsors and leaving Canada in danger of breaking its global promise.

As the federal budget comes down in Ottawa, this should be a top priority.

The global migrant crisis is, with or without our help, finding a way into our country. While the right and humane thing is for Canada to match rhetoric with policy, there is one more reason to spend the money to clear the backlog: private sponsorship works.

Speaking in front of the Commons immigration committee Monday, Minister Ahmed Hussen said 53 per cent of privately sponsored refugees had found full-time employment. For government-sponsored refugees that number is 10 per cent, he said.

Supported by the community around them, refugees are finding jobs faster than those assisted mostly by bureaucrats and agencies. The private sponsorship system allows families and community groups to pool their will, compassion and resources to help.

There are approximately 6,000 such sponsors awaiting approval by the federal government to be matched with a refugee family.

It thus came as a surprise to many families, churches, businesses and community groups to find that in mid-December, the department of citizenship and immigration quietly put a cap of 1,000 on the number of new applicants looking to sponsor Syrian and Iraqi refugees in 2017.

The change to the private sponsorship system for Syrian and Iraqi refugees was meant to ease the backlog in processing applications. Months later, the backlog persists.

At the same time that the Immigration and Refugee Board is battling a stack of applications, the government has increased the overall number of privately sponsored refugees that it plans to allow this year from elsewhere in the world. This year, Canada is planning for a high of 19,000 privately sponsored refugees.

The agency anticipates the situation will deteriorate. It foresees as many as 30,000 claims languishing. Wait times, which refugees and their advocates say are already lengthy, will double.

Speaking to The Canadian Press, the chairman of the IRB was frank, saying, "Efficiency has increased significantly, but there is no way we can deal with 30,000 cases when we're funded for about 17,000."

Supported and embraced, refugee families are integrating. Canadian communities have shown that they are willing to do their part.

The private sponsorship system is a workable extension of the generosity we proclaim. It's time for Ottawa to put the money in and figure it out.

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metro LIFE

Your essential daily news

This feature isn't working the way it should. We're sorry and we're going to fix it.
Johanna Wright, YouTube vice president of product management

YouTube pledges to stop filtering videos with LGBTQ themes as "restricted"

Why frozen is the new fresh

FOOD TRENDS

Our false idea of 'freshness' causes too much waste

Genna Buck
Metro | Toronto

When Karyl Agana looks in her home freezer, only one thing belongs to her: A package of salmon.

Like so many self-described foodies, the 28-year-old finance assistant prefers to buy nearly all her fruits, vegetables and meats fresh.

"I enjoy food a lot," she said. "I go out looking for great tasting food. And I make it look pleasing."

Agana aims to make four beautiful meals a week; sourcing ingredients from her Toronto neighbourhood's abundance of grocery stores and ethnic markets.

But inevitably, some of it gets wasted: About once a month, she goes through her fridge and throws away a full grocery bag of spoiled produce. And she's never been one to cook and freeze for later — she said she has nothing against it; it's just not what she grew up doing.

She's far from alone. According to Tammara Soma, who studies food waste at the University of Toronto's Food Systems Lab, Canadians spend a collective $107 billion per year on food that never gets eaten, including the cost of fuel and water.

Why? Because, she said, we're obsessed with a false ideal of freshness.

"We're so detached. We've lost that whole connection between production, processing and consumption," Soma said. "We gravitate toward the idea of freshness to become comfortable with the unknowns. Fresh means healthy, fresh means good."

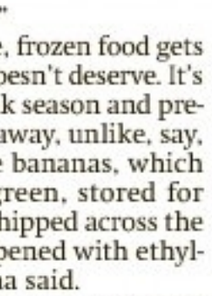
Meanwhile, frozen food gets a bad rap it doesn't deserve. It's picked at peak season and preserved right away, unlike, say, grocery-store bananas, which are picked green, stored for many days, shipped across the world and ripened with ethylene gas, Soma said.

"The idea that they're fresh is quite a paradox," she added. "Fresh is a marketing concept."

And our obsession with it is costing us. The typical North American fridge (unlike European fridges, which are a bit smaller) is an "enabler as a food waste," Soma said. "We stock it up and forget about it. We buy doubles of the same thing. It's a compost bin."

But the freezer is a powerful weapon against waste. Take herbs, for example: Most people buy a huge bunch but only use a few leaves, leaving the rest to rot.

"I enjoy food a lot. I go out looking for great tasting food. And I make it look pleasing.
Foodie but non-freezer Karyl Agana



Tammara Soma. CONTRIBUTED

Soma recommends pureeing them with olive oil and freezing them in ice-cube trays for an instant way to perk up pasta dishes and soups.

Sure, frozen fruits and vegetables can be a bit watery and mushy, which grosses some people out. But in things like soups and smoothies, you'll hardly notice.

"The more standards imposed on the food, the more opportunities there are for it to be wasted," Soma said. "It's time to implement a new measure of freshness that's simple: 'Does it smell good? Does it look edible?'"

FREEZE TO THE MAX EXPERT TIPS

Leanne Brown, author of Good and Cheap, a cookbook designed to help people on public assistance make cheap, nutritious meals gives her top tips:

Buy frozen and canned in the off-season
"You might think fresh is best, but for flavour reasons and cost reasons, pay attention to season. Fresh tomatoes right now are basically trash."

Compare prices in-store
Food prices fluctuate. "It would be nice if there were set rules; if canned and frozen were always cheaper. They're often not."

Cook and freeze a staple
"It's as simple as making a big pot of a really inexpensive staple like beans or lentils and having that be the centre of a taco meal, and then as a side another night."

Don't use your freezer as a dumping ground
"I've made too large a portion of something and I'm sick of it. Usually it is going to the freezer to die. Label it when you put it in there."

ROSE REISMAN THE SAVVY EATER Are regular bread crumbs and panko bread crumbs the same nutritionally?

THIS WEEK: Panko bread crumbs vs. plain bread crumbs

PICK THIS

Aurora Plain Panko Bread Crumbs (per ½ cup)

Calories 110
Fat 0g
Sodium 50mg

SKIP THIS

Pastene Plain Bread Crumbs (per ½ cup)

Calories 220
Fat 3g
Sodium 800mg

HERE'S WHY

Equivalent to 4 slices of Primo Vegetarian pizza from Panago in sodium.

Panko and bread crumbs are interchangeable in cooking. However, panko has a flakier, more delicate texture and is made predominantly from white bread crumbs without the crust. Regular bread crumbs can come from a variety of breads and have a finer texture. While they are fairly similar in terms of calories and fat, these plain bread crumbs have an excessive amount of sodium compared to the panko. Add an extra crunch to your dishes with panko and save on sodium!

Say it ain't dough: raw treat is a risk

FOOD SAFETY

Sweet trend is hot right now but cold batter can do damage

Genna Buck
Metro | Toronto

It's every kid's dream: Licking gooey, sugary cookie dough straight off the spoon or beater.

But beware: Trendy restaurants and cafés serving raw cookie dough could be doling out a dangerous dose of harmful bacteria as well. Uncooked or undercooked eggs could be contaminated with salmonella, and E. coli outbreaks have been linked to the consumption of raw flour, too.

So ask about safety before indulging in the nostalgia-fuelled cookie dough craze. Toronto's Junked Food Co., which started scooping cones of cookie dough earlier this month — and is already going through 600 pounds of the sweet stuff every weekend — uses only pasteurized eggs and heats the flour to 160 C to kill any harmful bugs that might be lurking, co-owner Brian McKilligan said.

If you want to be super-safe, the lemon flavour is totally egg-free.

The restaurant also has pints of dough available to take away — so there is the option to, you know, actually bake it and make cookies.

Junked Food Co. in Toronto went through pounds of cookie dough this month, serving it like ice cream, in what's being dubbed a new dessert craze. INSTAGRAM/JUNKEDFOODCO

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RETIRE IN B.C.

MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE, ONE WISH AT A TIME

Canada's largest seniors housing company is giving back to seniors and their families.

Chartwell Retirement Residences is now one and a half years into its partnership with non-profit organization Wish of a Lifetime Canada, which is dedicated to fulfilling lifelong wishes for Canadian seniors.

The organization's mission is to shift the way society views and values our oldest generations by fulfilling seniors' dreams and sharing their stories to inspire those of all ages.

"Giving back is part of the social fabric at Chartwell," says Brent Binions, president and CEO of Chartwell Retirement Residences. "It's an important component of our commitment to supporting the communities in which we operate."

The joint partnership builds on Chartwell's vision of "making people's lives better" and Wish of a Lifetime's commitment to empowering older adults to continue dreaming, daring and living a life of purpose.

And the results are inspiring.

Over the last year, several Chartwell residents in British Columbia have had their wishes fulfilled. David of Maple Ridge, B.C., returned to his hometown of London, England to show his daughter all the nostalgic places of his youth, including his former school.

Tutzi of North Vancouver, B.C., visited the beautiful Butchart Gardens and Fairmont Empress Hotel, fondly recalling the last trip she took there with her late husband almost 40 years ago.

Peter of Surrey, B.C., was never able to fulfill his musical passion living under apartheid in South Africa. He was given the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to conduct O Canada for the UBC Symphony Orchestra at the world-class Chan Centre for the Performing Arts.

Other wishes across the province include a visit to the Vancouver aquarium and a day trip to the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) to see rock band Foreigner perform live at the fair.

"This wish meant the world to me and will be something that I cherish for the rest of my life," said one wish recipient.

Chartwell residents, as well as all Canadian seniors, are encouraged to submit a wish application by visiting wishofalifetime.ca or speaking with a Chartwell residence Lifestyle and Program Manager.

CONTRIBUTED

CREATING MOMENTS THAT MATTER FOR RESIDENTS

Program carries out small wishes and acts of kindness

Everyday acts of kindness are just as important as grand gestures.

Chartwell Retirement Residences has taken that to heart. The senior living company has created a program called Moments that Matter, which helps foster a caring community for seniors across the country.

The Moments that Matter program helps carry out small wishes and acts of kindness for residents in Chartwell retirement and long-term care homes.

A Moment is a special request from a resident that will help put a smile on their face, and is organized and executed by caring staff.

"These small, yet important moments can leave a lasting impact on our residents' lives," says Allison Schindler, director of Memory Living and Life Enrichment at Chartwell.

For example, staff overheard that resident Lillian had never tried a Tim Horton's coffee before, so they decided to surprise her with a country drive and pit stop at Timmy's for her first sip of the classic Canadian brew.

Former dairy farmer resident Steve expressed his wish to see a baby calf again, so staff quickly arranged for a local farm to bring in some animals for him to visit, including a five-month-old calf.

Other Moments at Chartwell include a drive in an 18-wheeler, an excursion to an old family farm, a baseball game outing and a tour of Parliament that resulted in a surprise meet-and-greet with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

These are unique and memorable experiences for residents that the dedicated staff at Chartwell help to create each day.

For more information on our Moments that Matter program, visit chartwell.com.

THESE SMALL, YET IMPORTANT MOMENTS CAN LEAVE A LASTING IMPACT ON OUR RESIDENTS' LIVES.

– Allison Schindler

CONTRIBUTED

Staying active at Chartwell

Chartwell residences offer a variety of programs that contribute to an active and engaged lifestyle.

The company's LiveNow programming brings together six dimensions of wellness: physical, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and vocational pursuits. Each dimension has a unique signature program tailored to residents to help them lead more fulfilled and engaged lives.

Whether residents are participating in a Rhythm 'n' Moves dance class, or preparing lunches for local kids in need, the LiveNow program, carried out daily by the organization's dedicated lifestyle and program managers, is sure to inspire.

All Chartwell residences are offered a variety of recreational programs and activities to meet the needs of everyone, in addition to ensuring residents continue to participate in their preexisting community activities.

Programs take place onsite and out in the community, and are created for people with many different interests and abilities. Residents are encouraged to lead active and engaged lives while enjoying an inclusive and social atmosphere where they can truly feel fulfilled.

From interest clubs and excursions, to dance classes and celebrations, there is always an array of programs and activities for residents to choose from.

Celebrating 7 years of peace of mind.

Since Carmel moved into her Chartwell residence, daughter Cathy admits her mom is so busy with social events that it's sometimes difficult to get her on the phone! Instead of managing errands and worrying about household responsibilities, the two now spend more quality time together. You too can experience the peace of mind that comes with living in an engaging community.

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Retire with peace of mind

CONTRIBUTED

If you're a baby boomer and you feel a lot of uncertainty around retirement, you're not alone, according to Jonathan Huen, a Sun Life Financial advisor.

"Many people who are at retirement age wonder how they can retire well, with peace of mind knowing that their loved ones will be taken care of if they get sick or injured," Huen says. "The first step you should take is to talk to an advisor."

"Talking with an advisor will help you understand how your needs and risks will change over time, then they'll help you build a plan to achieve lifetime financial security," he says."They can show you important options that can help protect your savings and lifestyle, including critical illness and long-term care insurance, should an unexpected health event occur."

When his clients are starting to think about retirement, Huen uses Sun Life Financial's Money for Life approach. He works with clients to create a plan to help them become financially prepared so they can deal with their changing expenses and potential issues that may arise as they age.

"Risk management is an important part of retirement planning," says Huen. "And it's never too early or too late to start planning for your short-and long-term goals. With a plan in place, you'll have peace of mind knowing you can confidently retire your way."

To learn more and start planning your retirement, visit sunlife.ca/MoneyForLife and book a free appointment with a Sun Life advisor.

MAKE YOUR LONG-TERM FINANCIAL GOALS A REALITY

Looking forward to retirement? You can live it sooner than you think with a little long-term planning, according to Ross McCorquodale, a financial advisor with Edward Jones.

"We all wish to retire happily ever after, but you're far more likely to make that dream retirement a reality if you take an approach to investing based on long-term, measurable goals, rather than just picking at random or having no rate of return assumption for your investments and hoping for the best," McCorquodale explains.

He helps his clients talk through their goals — sending kids to university, traveling together, leaving an inheritance to their loved ones — then helps them figure out how much they should save to make it happen. Next, he helps his clients choose a savings structure that will work for them.

"You'll want to consider the right balance between an RRSP or a TFSA, based on your income and other needs," McCorquodale explains. "The primary goal is to always reduce taxes and fees to help boost your retirement savings."

CONTRIBUTED

Edward Jones advisors work with clients to help them reach their long-term goals.

For a simple snapshot of your retirement savings, check the Edward Jones website Retirement Savings Calculator, Savings Calculator and Life Insurance Calculator, which will help you visualize how much you need to save.

To develop a tailored plan to meet your financial and personal needs, book a free consultation with an Edward Jones advisor.

For more information, visit edwardjones.ca.

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QUALITY SENIOR HOME CARE THAT YOU CAN RELY ON

When you're caring for seniors, it's important to take a tailored approach, according to Carolina Orosa, President of Home Care Assistance, a home care company with more than 200 caregivers serving clients across Metro Vancouver.

Caregivers at Home Care Assistance provide assistance with bathing, grooming, medication reminders, meal preparation and housekeeping — but they go a step further, focusing on proper nutrition, physical and mental stimulation, and social interaction as part of the company's Balanced Care Method.

Ongoing communication and supervision is another important part of the process, says Orosa.

The company's highly qualified case managers perform comprehensive assessments and develop customized care plans, do regular home visits, update family members and provide them with resources in the community. They also liaise with other health care professionals involved in the care.

ISTOCK

"We're a strong advocate for our clients and strive to ensure they live high quality lives in the comfort of their homes," Orosa says.

Education is another big component, says Orosa. The company helps its trained caregivers further their education with the company's Home Care Assistance University, which offers more than 100 courses covering all areas of aging.

And for clients who are in the hospital, the company's Hospital-to-Home program creates a seamless transition back home, including round-the-clock supervision for the first 72 hours, and a customized care plan that helps prevent readmission.

Learn more at homecareassistancevancouver.ca, or call 778-279-3634.

FOCUS ON YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

If you've been in the work force for 20 years, you're likely in your peak earning years. As your finances improve, now is the time to also focus on improving your long-term financial future. Here are some tips from the experts at Investors Group.

Pay off debt. Apply some of your extra money to paying down your mortgage and other debts.

Build for retirement. Develop an effective investment portfolio and apply an ever-increasing amount of your income to your portfolio and other vehicles for retirement savings, such as registered retirement savings plans and tax-free savings accounts. The earlier you invest in RRSPs, for example, the more you maximize the magic of compounding. By making your maximum RRSP contribution each year, you'll maximize your tax savings.

Identify your priorities. As your income increases, it's tempting to purchase something significant, like a cottage, vehicle or boat. But beware of spending too much now at the expense of your retirement years. It's better to identify your priorities and budget to achieve them without compromising your future.

Help your kids. It's tougher these days for young people to become financially independent. You may want to help yours with tuition and other financial support, perhaps for several years beyond college or university while they get established in their careers. A registered education savings plan can help rein in the rising costs of a post-secondary education. Investing a few dollars each earnings period in a fund for "kids' support" is also a good idea.

ISTOCK

Support your parents. You're a member of the "sandwich generation," and so could find yourself supporting them in some fashion. Include that possibility in your budgeting decisions.

Plan to retire. Whether you intend to work into the traditional retirement years or are aiming to retire early, make sure you have a plan that will get you there in financial comfort.

-NEWS CANADA

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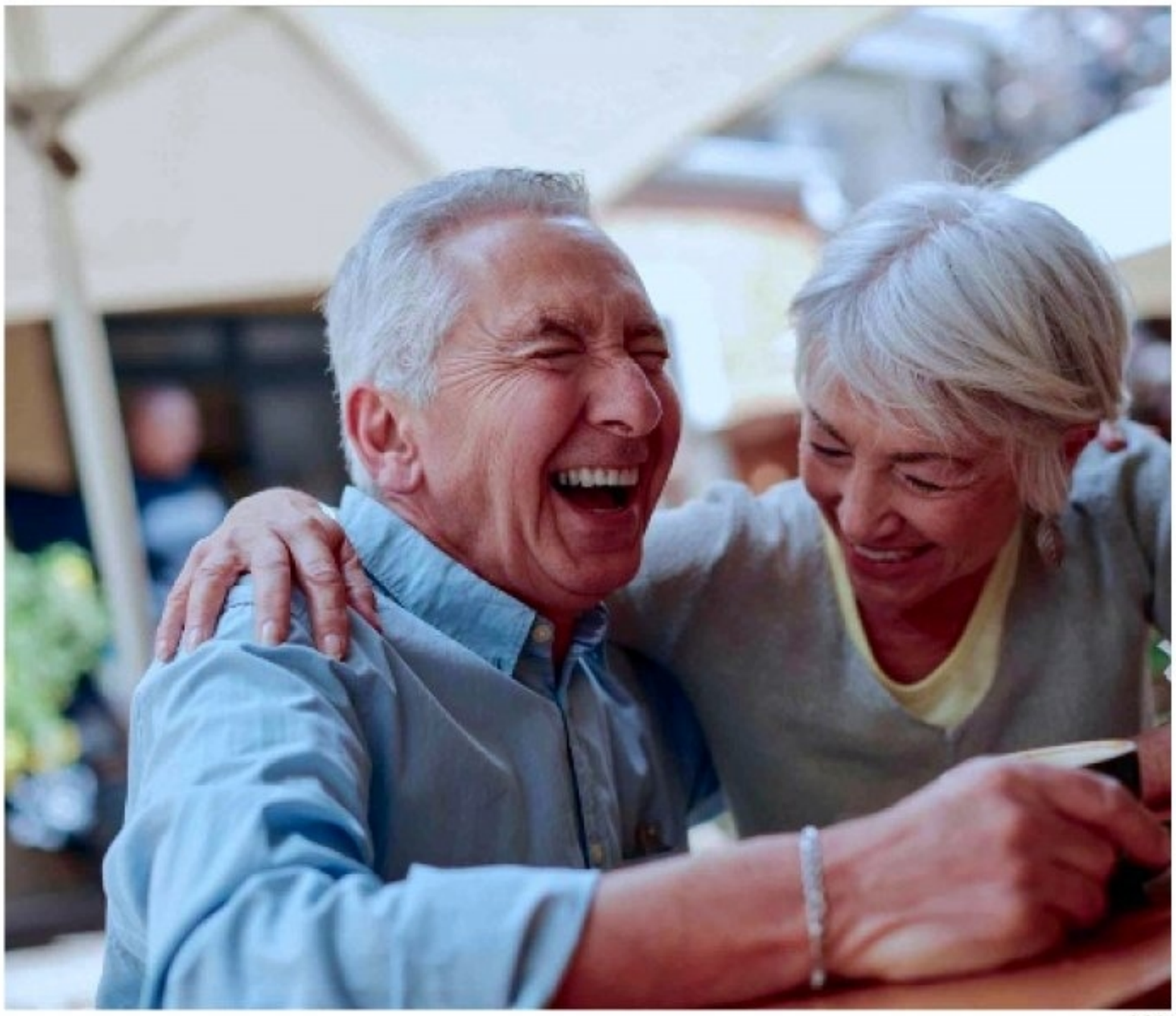

ISTOCK

BECOME FINANCIALLY SECURE FOR RETIREMENT

Follow these investment and savings tips and enjoy financial freedom in your golden years

Retirement is the golden years when you should be able to enjoy life your way — but you'll need a solid financial plan to make that happen.

Here are four financial tips to retiring well.

Get out of debt

If you have a fixed income in retirement, as most people do, your purchasing power will go down over the years because of inflation. Debt is the last thing you'll want to use that income for.

First get rid of high-interest debt, like credit card debt. If you have a mortgage right now, arrange saving and payments so that you can pay it off before you retire, if possible.

Be strategic about the tools you use to save

When you're saving for retirement, you can use one of several tools. RRSPs and TFSAs are two that can help you avoid income tax. But one can be better than the other, depending on your situation, so use them wisely.

For example, if you have a low income in a relatively lower tax bracket, top up your TFSAs before you top up your RRSPs. On the other hand, if you have a large capital gain one year, you can save yourself from being taxed at a higher rate by using that money to top up your RRSPs.

Invest wisely

The traditional wisdom has been that, the older people get, the greater the proportion of their investment portfolio should be in fixed-income investments, which guarantee you'll receive a fixed payment at a set time and frequency.

However, that's not necessarily the best advice today when interest rates are historically low. In addition, life expectancy has increased, so people need their wealth to keep growing to support them into very old age. As a result, some of today's retirees are keeping some of their portfolio in higher-risk equities.

A financial planner can help you balance your portfolio to make your money last.

Look at your cash flow

You'll likely have a fixed income when you retire, so you'll need to know you can cover all your expenses. Your income may include old-age security (OAS) payments from the government, as well as the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), a pension from your workplace, and a Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) for low-income people.

Create a budget that takes into account all your income and expenses during retirement. And don't forget to save a contingency fund to cover surprise expenses.

When it comes to retirement, it's never too early to start planning.

-STEPHANIE ORFORD

ISTOCK

WRAP YOUR MIND AROUND DOWNSIZING EARLY ON

'One of the main challenges is people don't start early enough, they think it's just going to happen....'

Family and years of memories filled up the house, but now it just feels empty and it's just too much work.

When it comes to downsizing, it's best to start early, said Colette Robicheau, organizing consultant and coach. She said people in their 50s like her should start getting their minds around it.

"One of the main challenges is people don't start early enough, they think it's just going to happen and they don't want to think for any reason they would have to downsize."

But whether it's for health reasons, financial issues, being closer to amenities or family, or just simply wanting a smaller home, downsizing could be on the horizon.

Robichaud said first it's important to know how much space you'll have, decide what's necessary and how much room is left for sentimental items.

"So large sets of china that are really nice and have a sentimentality with it, they're tough to take," she said. "A lot of people move too much stuff and they're stuck with a cluttered living space which is not even safe, let alone looking kooky."

Here's a good idea: get the floor plan of your new space and stretch out painters tape on the floor of your home. This way you'll get a good visual of what you can move with you. And you may need to rethink your furniture, Robichaud said. For example, it might make more sense for a dresser to be more vertical than wide.

Or if you're not ready to move yet, try living on one floor of your house to get used to living with less space.

Roy Thomas, seniors real estate specialist, said when you're ready to shop for a new space, first figure out what exactly you want and how much space you'll need.

"If you're going from a 3,000-square-foot house to a 1,000-square-foot apartment then you've got to pretty much eliminate two thirds of things."

He said apartments are the most popular choice for downsizing in HRM because many people don't want the maintenance and like the freedom of locking the door and traveling.

And if you're thinking about buying a condo, Thomas recommended having a plan of how long you're going to be there. If you're selling it in two years, you might lose money on it, he said.

-JENNIFER TAPLIN

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Ucluelet, B.C. is home to the spectacular Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. ISTOCK

EXPLORE BEAUTIFUL B.C. IN AN RV

With so much nature to soak up province-wide, why not experience it all in your retirement

As go-getter baby boomers retire, they're taking RV living to the next level, adventuring to locales across B.C. to experience all the natural and cultural richness the province has to offer.

Here are five spectacular destinations across the province to get you inspired.

Golden Ears Provincial Park

Close enough to Vancouver for a weekend retreat, but far enough away to experience the beauty and serenity of the B.C. wilderness, Golden Ears Provincial Park is a local gem.

Spend the day hiking on the abundance of trails, or swim, fish or rent a canoe on Alouette Lake. Three campgrounds are available, all RV accessible — Alouette, Gold Creek and North Beach campgrounds. If you're looking for a place just out of Vancouver to take a rental RV on a test run, this is a great option.

Pacific Rim National Park Reserve

This spectacular provincial park is located on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

Visit the section at Long Beach, located between the communities of Ucluelet and Tofino, and discover the 16-kilometre stretch of sand it's named after.

Kamloops

Located where the two branches of the Thompson River meet, the City of Kamloops offers a balance of urban convenience and access to the natural beauty of south central B.C.

With 13 golf courses in the area, as well as abundant hiking and fishing, you'll have every reason to get outdoors.

Kootenay National Park

Explore the dramatic Kootenay mountain range in this spectacular park, located in southeastern B.C. You can take a guided hike to the Burgess shale fossils beds.

To explore on your own, try finding Kootenay Park's Red Chairs, placed around the park overlooking some of its most scenic views. Or visit the historic Radium Hot Springs for a relaxing soak in a natural outdoor setting.

Oliver

If nature and wine tie for number one in your heart, Oliver is the place to be. The community is located in the heart of the Okanagan's wine country in warm, dry southern B.C.

You'll find abundant RV campsites at four provincial parks close to town — Vaseux Lake, Inkameep, Okanagan Falls and Haynes Point.

It's the ideal place to kick off a wine tour, exploring nearby vineyards including the award-winning Silver Sage, Hester Creek and Burrowing Owl wineries.

Now that you're retired, B.C.'s spectacular nature and welcoming communities are yours to discover. What are you waiting for?

-STEPHANIE ORFORD

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HANDOUT

REVIEW

A low range almost doesn't factor at this price point

Dan Ilika
AutoGuide.com

It's unlikely this is what Hyundai had in mind for the media drive of the all-new Ioniq Electric, the brand's first real attempt at breaking into the slow-selling EV market.

What this entails is an unexpected bout of unseasonably bad weather in Kelowna, B.C. It's not unrealistic to expect temperatures around 8 C this time of year in the Okanagan Valley; instead it's about –5 C and snowing, with some freezing rain mixed in. This poses obvious problems.

Cold weather is the enemy of electric vehicles. From its effects on the battery to the additional energy needed to run the car's climate control system, range is reduced in a big way when the mercury plunges. Yet here we are, ready to set out on a journey intended to cover about 113 kilometres, or a little more than half the estimated range of the Ioniq Electric. Only our tester isn't showing anywhere near the range the car is capable of despite efforts to top up the charge.

Packing a 28-kWh battery, the Hyundai Ioniq Electric is good for an estimated 200 km of driving. That's barely better than the aging Nissan Leaf (172 km), which was introduced way back in 2010, and almost half the range of the all-new Chevrolet Bolt (383 km), though the Bolt's battery boasts twice the capacity.

Setting out for our drive from a snow-covered parking lot, the car's estimated range of about 169 km is looming.

Parlaying power from the battery to the front wheels is an electric motor and a single-speed reduction gear transmission, while a set of regenerative brakes can send energy back to the battery. While the Ioniq Electric is hampered somewhat by the additional heft of its beefy battery, the torque from the electric motor helps to disguise it and makes the car feel nimble.

While it tends to float over uneven pavement like an old Lincoln thanks to its low center of gravity created by the battery, the car features taut and responsive steering that's superior to its gas-electric sibling, the Ioniq Hybrid. It isn't, however, quite as sure-footed on slippery surfaces.

The Ioniq Electric may not compare to the likes of the Chevy Bolt — or the pending Tesla Model 3 — when it comes to range, but it has it beat when it comes to price. Base models are expected to start at $35,000, with a fully loaded version to cost somewhere in the neighborhood of $42,000. That poses an interesting value proposition when compared to virtually other EVs on the market.

Ending our drive, our tester is still showing nearly 80 km of range remaining — no small feat. Hyundai's first all-electric offering impresses, even with the cold winter weather rearing its efficiency-sapping head.

THE CHECKLIST | 2017 HYUNDAI IONIQ ELECTRIC REVIEW

THE BASICS

Engine: Single motor drive unit
Output: 120 horsepower, 215 pound-feet of torque
Transmission: Single-speed reduction gear
Battery size: 28 kWh
Estimated range: 200 kilometres
Price: Starts at $35,000 (est.) (before available incentives)

LOVE IT

- Familiar driving feel
- Cabin layout
- Competitive pricing

LEAVE IT

- Quirky design
- Relatively small battery
- Adjustable brake regeneration

NO FUN

New report confirms that car buyers are boring people

Dan Ilika
AutoGuide.com

Apparently the auto market is increasingly looking like an eight-bit greyscale, with the vast majority of new vehicles sold these days finished in a less-than-exciting quartet of colours.

That's according to a report from paint supplier Axalta, which found that an astonishing 77 per cent of cars, trucks and SUVs sold in 2016 were finished in white, silver, grey and black. If there ever was a barometer of just how boring car-buyers have become this is it.

White led the way at 37 per cent of global sales, trailed by black at 18 per cent. Grey and silver followed at 11 per cent each. Worse still, 2016 marked the sixth consecutive year white was the No. 1 seller, which overtook silver in 2011. Line them all up and it's like our parking lots are stuck in the movie Pleasantville. (If you understand this obscure reference then you will understand how sad the situation is.)

The picture is a slightly less bleak one in North America, with red (10 per cent) and blue (eight per cent) adding a splash of colour to the mix, though white, black, grey and silver still led the way on the continent by a landslide.

There is, however, some reprieve on the horizon. Axalta says "colourful hues are tinting traditional neutral colors" to bring colour back into vogue. Here's to a slightly darker shade of burnt orange coming soon to a dealer near you.

White has been the best selling shade since 2011 and last year it accounted for 37 per cent of vehicle sales globally. ISTOCK

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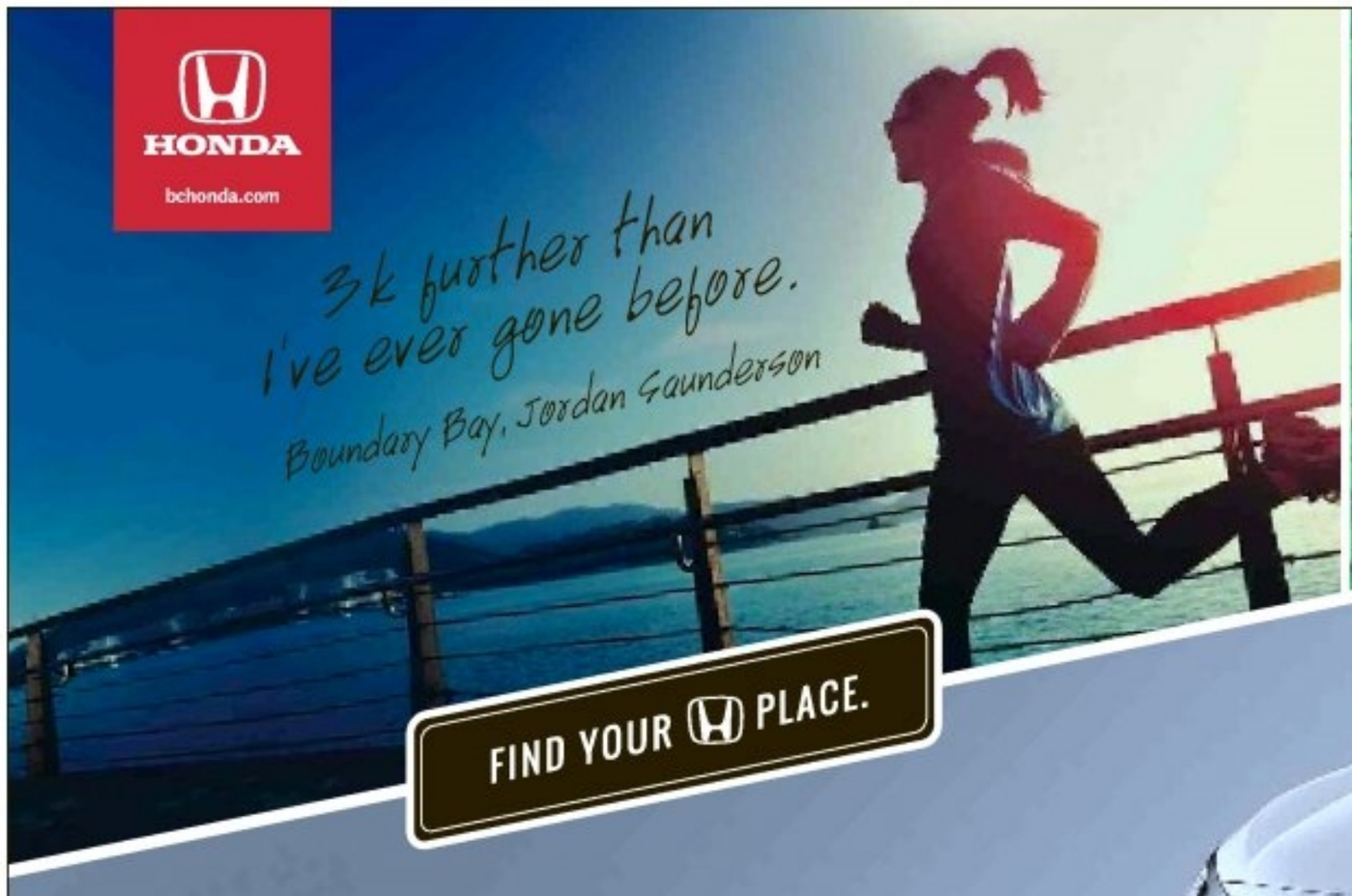

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Outdated technology inspiring innovation

HYUNDAI

Patent filed for innovative three-cylinder engine

Jason Siu
AutoGuide.com

The Korean automaker has plans for a combined-cycle combustion engine that will improve fuel efficiency. HANDOUT

Hyundai has filed a patent for a three-cylinder engine with some very interesting technology.

The patent application was filed on November 30, 2015 but was published on March 16, 2017. In it, the Korean automaker details a three-cylinder engine where two of the cylinders perform four-cycle combustion while the remaining cylinder is two-cycle combustion. Essentially it's a combined-cycle combustion engine in hopes of improving fuel efficiency, among other things.

"However, since the three-cylinder engine has structural characteristics in which bores, strokes, and valve timings of the respective cylinders are equal to one another, the engine generates noise and vibration compared to typical four or more cylinder engines," the patent application says. "To resolve this, it is necessary to devise a design technique for three-cylinder engines in which a three-cylinder engine combines a four-cycle with a two-cycle. In addition, since engine performance (for example, power and torque) is deteriorated when this combined cycle engine is controlled, merchantable quality of the engine may be lowered."

It appears Hyundai is looking to solve the deterioration by combining two- and four-cycle cylinders. Since the bore, stroke and valve timing of the two-cycle cylinder can differ from the four-cycle cylinder, the same power is generated in the two- and four-cycle cylinders, preventing engine performance from dropping when the three-cylinder engine is operated under the combined cycles. It also maintains the advantages of a three-cylinder engine, mainly its compact structure and high fuel efficiency.

Expect to see more three-cylinder engines being developed by automakers in the coming years. The new Ford Fiesta ST for example, uses a three-cylinder EcoBoost engine to generate 200 horsepower and 214 pound-feet of torque.

TECHNOLOGY

Ford's Pedestrian Detection system gets night vision

Ford has improved its Pedestrian Detection technology so that it now works at night.

According to a new poll commissioned by Ford, night blindness and fear of hitting someone top night-time driving fears and the American automaker is hoping its latest technology helps alleviate those worries. The new technology is designed to detect pedestrians at night and then automatically apply the brakes if the driver does not respond to initial warnings.

In order to get Pedestrian Detection to work at night for the first time, the development team worked at night by sending life-sized dummies into the path of vehicles on closed tracks. The system was also tested on public roads in busy cities including Paris and Amsterdam.

So how does it all work? Basically, the system processes information from a radar located in the bumper and a windshield-mounted camera through a database of "pedestrian shapes" to distinguish people from objects like road signs and trees. According to Ford, the camera delivers over 30 snapshots every second, and the video live feed and wide viewing angle allows the system to see pedestrians, even in low-light conditions.

In North America, the technology will first debut on the 2018 Ford F-150 and Ford Mustang models, while Europeans will first see it on the next-generation Ford Fiesta that debuted at the 2017 Geneva Motor Show last week.

"We know some drivers find hitting the road at night a stressful experience. Especially driving in towns and cities, pedestrians — sometimes distracted by mobiles — can without warning step into the road, leaving even alert drivers very little time to avoid an accident," said Gregor Allexi, active safety engineer, Ford of Europe. "Day and night, Pedestrian Detection is designed to help identify people already in — or about to step into — the road ahead."

JASON SIU/AUTOGUIDE.COM

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That electric feel becoming luxury

LOTUS ELISE

Punching above its weight

The Lotus Elise has received minor updates for 2017, including the addition of an all-new, ultra lightweight Elise Sprint model variant.

The Sprint trim line can be specified with Elise Sport and Elise Sport 220 models and will shave 90 pounds from the outgoing Elise Sport.

Following Lotus founder Colin Chapman's famous mantra of "simplify and add lightness," the Elise Sport features a lightweight lithium ion battery that saves 20 lbs, lightweight alloy wheels saving 11 lbs and carbon fiber race seats saving 13.2 lbs.

Other standard lightweight components on the Elise Sprint means it tips the scales at 1,759 lbs dry.

SAM MCEACHERN/AUTOGUIDE.COM

ALL PHOTOS HANDOUT EXCEPT WHERE NOTED

CAYENNE

High-end hybrid

The new Porsche Panamera introduced us to the Turbo S E-Hybrid powertain which is set to spread to at least on more model. Porsche confirmed that the Cayenne will be adopting the new hybrid powertrain, which has a total system output of 680 horsepower and 628 pound-feet of torque. It is comprised of a turbocharged 4.0-liter V8 paired to an electric motor.

With its all-electric Mission E sports car on the horizon and the rise of electrification across its lineup, Porsche wants to push the idea of an electrified top-trim model. STEPHEN ELMER/AUTOGUIDE.COM

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MCLAREN

Lighten up

It's barely been a week since McLaren's newest supercar debuted and there's already talks of a hotter version.

The McLaren 720S was officially unveiled at the 2017 Geneva Motor Show. But it's probably less of a surprise that a McLaren 720S LT is in the pipeline, especially considering other exotic automakers are focusing on lighter, more hardcore versions like the Lamborghini Huracan Performante. Ferrari is also working on a track-oriented version of the 488. JASON SIU/AUTOGUIDE.COM

NIO EVE

Can I copy your homework?

Chinese automaker NIO has unveiled a new EV, but Faraday Future is quick to point out the similarities.

The EVE Concept presented at SXSW is designed to be an autonomous "digital companion" with an artificial intelligence engine called NOMI. Faraday Future called the automaker out as it unveiled its FF 91 earlier this year. JASON SIU/AUTOGUIDE.COM

AUTO NEWS

BMW wants to sell fully self-driving cars by 2021

BMW is laying out a timeline for its self-driving cars, planning to have them on the road by 2021.

"We are on the way to deliver a car in 2021 with level 3, 4 and 5," said Elmar Fickenstein, BMW's senior vice president for autonomous driving. Level three still requires the driver to focus on control of the vehicle, while levels four and five are best described as fully self-driving. The jump from level three to four will be the hardest, as it also means that responsibility is placed on the vehicle's systems, not the driver. STEPHEN ELMER/AUTOGUIDE.COM

metro SPORTS

"The Giants will always be my family": Barry Bonds is back with San Francisco as a special adviser

Sedin digs Canucks out of losing hole

NHL

Winger scores in overtime for team's first win in seven games

The Canucks' Daniel Sedin advances the puck past Marcus Kruger of the Blackhawks on Tuesday night. JONATHAN DANIEL/GETTY IMAGES

Daniel Sedin scored a power-play goal 2:12 into overtime and the Vancouver Canucks beat the Chicago Blackhawks 5-4 on Tuesday night to end a six-game skid.

With his twin brother Henrik Sedin screening goalie Scott Darling, Daniel Sedin connected on a high, long shot. The score withstood a video review for goaltender interference and snapped the Blackhawks' five-game winning streak.

Chicago rookie Ryan Hartman scored his second goal of the game with 1:03 left in the third period to tie it at 4-4. The Blackhawks rallied with three goals in the third period to send it to overtime.

Vancouver's Brandon Sutter scored two goals to end a 13-game drought. Sutter, along with Henrik Sedin and Reid Boucher, connected on three of the Canucks' first five shots as Vancouver pounced on Chicago mistakes to build a 4-1 advantage.

The Sedins combined on goals for the 703rd and 704th times, second only to Wayne Gretzky and Jari Kurri.

TUESDAY In Chicago

5	4
CANUCKS	HAWKS

Ryan Miller made 40 saves as the Canucks were outshot 44-15.

Marian Hossa scored his 23rd goal and Richard Panik his 20th in the third period to help Chicago storm back late for a second straight game.

Chicago all-star Corey Crawford made just six saves on 10 shots before being relieved by Darling after Sutter scored his second goal — and 17th of the season — at 2:15 of the third.

The Blackhawks' Central Division lead over Minnesota dropped to six points after the Wild's 3-2 win over San Jose.

The fading Canucks entered having lost four straight in regulation and were 0-4-2 in their last six.

Vancouver had been outscored 21-9 in the six-game slide and 15-5 in the last four.

Vancouver is in action again on Thursday in St. Louis in the third of a five-game trip.

Chicago will host Dallas on Thursday, then play six of its final eight regular-season games on the road. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SWIMMING

Olympic medallist Cochrane retires

Ryan Cochrane is ready for his reinvention.

The 28-year-old from Victoria, a consistent medal producer during a thin time for Canada's swim program, announced his retirement from competition Tuesday. He ends his decorated career with two Olympic medals in the men's 1,500-metre freestyle — a silver and a bronze — and eight world championship medals, the most by a Canadian swimmer.

"Thinking of stepping away is the most difficult decision I've ever had to make because it's reinventing yourself, which is both exciting and terrifying at the same time," Cochrane said Tuesday on a conference call.

Going from someone who is in the top percentile in the world at something to someone who isn't can be a difficult transition for athletes as they re-define themselves.

Ryan Cochrane GETTY IMAGES

Cochrane, who has started a job working for a software company in Victoria, is tackling that transformation.

"I won't miss the constant exhaustion and the days you can't even function you're so tired all the time," Cochrane said

"I'm going to miss focusing on something that seemed a bit bigger than myself. Being part of the Olympic movement was something I underestimated when I started swimming and that I can't say enough about now." THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Newton will have surgery on throwing shoulder

Panthers quarterback Cam Newton will undergo surgery on March 30 to repair a partially torn rotator cuff in his right throwing shoulder.

Panthers team spokesman Steve Drummond said Tuesday that Newton will miss minicamp and OTAs, but is expected to be ready for the start of training camp in late July.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Raptors beat Bulls for the first time since 2013

The Toronto Raptors have finally beaten the Chicago Bulls.

DeMar DeRozan poured in 42 points as the Raptors rallied to beat Chicago 122-120 in overtime after a fierce fourth-quarter comeback on Tuesday.

It was Toronto's first victory over Chicago in a dozen games, a streak that stretched back to Dec. 31, 2013. THE CANADIAN PRESS

MAKE IT TONIGHT

Refreshing Green Goddess Salad

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

The play of creamy and crunchy in this salad makes it irresistible. And its green freshness is almost enough to remind us that spring is coming.

Ready in 15 minutes
Cook time: 5 minutes
Serves 2

Ingredients
- 1/2 avocado
- 3/4 cup buttermilk
- 2 Tbsp chives, basil (you could use tarragon, dill, parsley, etc)
- 3 tsp white wine vinegar
- 1 tsp anchovy paste
- 1 cup scallions
- 6 or 7 stalks of asparagus, trimmed
- 2 or 3 handfuls of Boston or Bibb lettuce
- 1/2 avocado, cubed
- 1/2 English cucumber, sliced
- 1 handful of cherry tomatoes
- 1/4 cup feta cheese, crumbled

Directions

1. Place the first six ingredients in a blender and whiz away. Have a taste and see if it needs a bit more buttermilk to thin it out or a splash more vinegar to brighten it up.

2. Cook the asparagus in simmering water for 3 to 5 minutes until just tender. Plunge them into ice water to stop them from over cooking. Then drain and chop into bite-sized pieces.

3. Wash and dry all of your other veggies. Tear and arrange your lettuce on a large platter or on each plate.

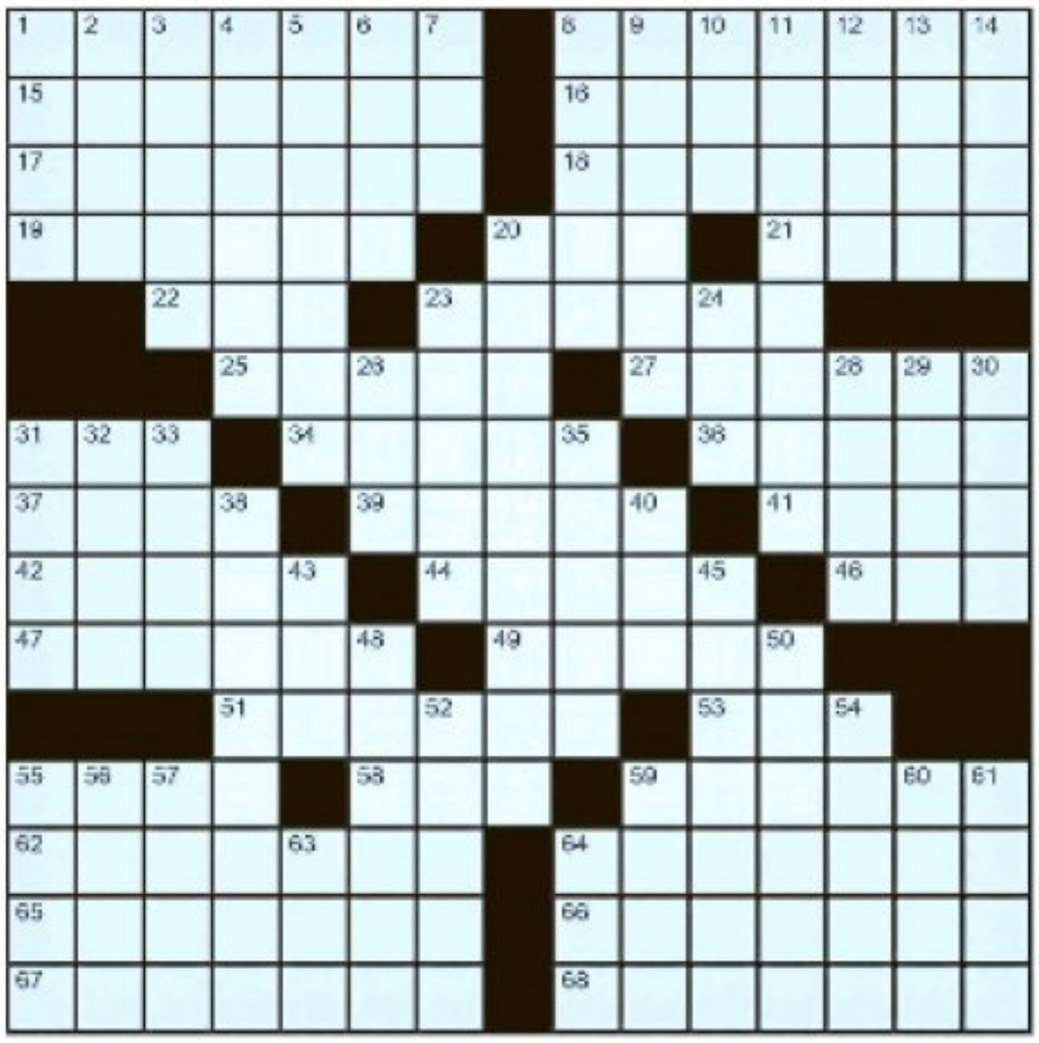
4. Top with avocado, asparagus, cucumber, tomato.

5. Dress your salad and then top with feta.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. 'CANADA' as opposed to 'Canada': 2 wds.
8. Range out West
15. "Yeah, right."
16. Hospital attendant
17. Living-forever being
18. Contempt
19. "I Will Survive" by Gloria _
20. Tarte, in Toronto
21. Trait carrier
22. Snugly-secluded spot
23. Cute little fish of freshwaters
25. Energize
27. Make a mistake: 2 wds.
31. Dry, like champagne
34. Pour _ _ troubled waters
36. Vista
37. Hamlet genre, for short
39. Home furnishings, wallpaper, etc.
41. Prince Harry's sister-in-law
42. Heron variety
44. Beiges
46. Roman sun god
47. Inert
49. Be born as a baby bird
51. Lake _ (1980 Winter Olympics site)
53. '_' _ in Halifax
55. Competent
58. "The Man _ Fell to Earth" (1976)
59. The _ Union
62. It flows in the direction the wind is blowing: 2 wds.
64. Alleviate
65. Grunge rock city in Washington state
66. Vitamin C sources
67. Going-against person
68. Financial field fusions

DOWN
1. Prepare for the trip, pack _ _
2. Priest of Tibet
3. Architect, Frank _ Wright
4. Mr. Wilde of "The Walls of Jericho" (1948)
5. Melanie's lasered-off tattoo
6. Seckel is a sort
7. Canadian hockey great Mr. Apps
8. Sculptor of The Thinker
9. Get one's bearings
10. DVD-looking items
11. Appalachian Mountains village in New Brunswick
12. Latin hymn, with 'Dies'
13. Tiger Wood's ex-wife
14. Since, in ye olden days
20. The National Ballet of Canada's current production about a famous marionette ...more at #38-Down!
23. Skirmish
24. Alternatives
26. Singer's clip on MuchMusic, for short
28. _ and carrots
29. Do _ others...
30. Apple part
31. Proofer's term
32. Therefore
33. Victoria-born painter Emily
35. U.S.-Canadian airspace protection org.
38. Lumberjack in the show at #20-Down which offers a Canuck spin on the classic tale
40. Groove
43. Pop group, '_ Tuesday
45. Rhodes student at Oxford
48. Dilly-dally
50. 1974: "(You're) _ My Baby" by Paul Anka
52. Jolliness
54. Warfare takeover
55. In addition
56. Horn's honk!
57. Spring
59. Bone-dry
60. Of all time
61. "Guarding _" (1994)
63. The current US President's oldest daughter ...her initials-sharers
64. Movie genre, _-com

✷ IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
During conversations with bosses and VIPs today, don't volunteer for anything. Also, don't agree to anything important. (This is for your own protection.)

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Although you are interested in travel plans right now, do not make those plans today. Whatever you start today probably will have to be changed later.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
This is a good day for important discussions, especially about shared property, inheritances or decisions about how to divide something. Postpone these discussions until Friday. (You will be glad you did.)

Cancer June 22 - July 23
When talking to close friends and partners today, keep things light. This is not a good day to make agreements. Things are just too fuzzy.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Just maintain your usual pace at work today and don't try anything new. Do not volunteer for anything or suggest improvements. Wait until Friday to do this.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
This is a wonderfully creative day for your sign, because your imagination is free-floating! If you work in the arts or in the entertainment world, you will have great ideas

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
This is the perfect day for hiding at home and relaxing. Do not shop for anything other than food or gas. Just take it easy.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
This is a great day to schmooze and talk to others, because you feel friendly and lighthearted. Enjoy these discussions, but avoid important decisions.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
This is a poor day for any kind of financial negotiation. Don't spend money professionally. And when it comes to personal spending, spend money on food or gas only.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Today the Moon is in your sign, but it's in a hazy placement. In fact, it's a goofy day that is great for creativity and socializing, but not serious business.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You will enjoy being by yourself today, especially if you can find solitude in beautiful surroundings. Basically, it's hard to get really serious about anything.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
This is a great day to talk to others, especially a female companion. Share your hopes and dreams for the future to see what others say.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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		4		5				9
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				7				
		6			3			5

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

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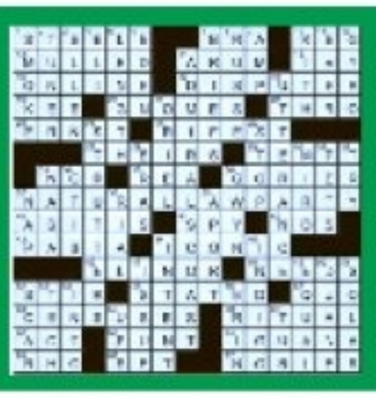

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9	1	2	8	4	3	5	6	7
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1	9	8	3	2	4	7	5	6
5	2	4	6	1	7	9	3	8
7	4	9	5	3	1	6	8	2
3	6	5	7	8	2	4	1	9
2	8	1	4	6	9	3	7	5

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